

NOTE

Range Expansion of the Red Imported Fire Ant, *Solenopsis invicta* Buren (Hymenoptera: Formicidae), into New Mexico and Extreme Western Texas

The red imported fire ant, *Solenopsis invicta* Buren, has greatly expanded its distribution in the United States since its accidental introduction into the United States from South America in the 1930's (Buren et al. 1974. *Journal of the New York Entomological Society* 82: 113-124). It currently occurs throughout the southeastern United States from southeastern Virginia (Waller and Vander Meer. 1993. *Association Southeastern Biologists Bulletin* 40: 88), south to Florida (Callcott and Collins. 1996. *Florida Entomologist* 79: 240-251) west to Brownsville, Texas (Allen et al. 1993. *Southwestern Entomologist* 18: 315-316) and Midland, Lubbock, and Ector counties, Texas (Cokendolpher and Phillips. 1989. *Southwestern Naturalist* 34: 443-449; Porter et al. 1991. *Journal of Economic Entomology* 84: 866-874; Callcott and Collins 1996). *Solenopsis invicta* is actually a junior synonym of *S. wagneri* Santschi (Bolton. 1995. *A New General Catalogue of the Ants of the World*, Harvard University Press, p. 388), but we prefer to us *S. invicta*, as the name is so well established. Introduced fire ants can be separated easily from our native fire ants by the presence of a median tooth on the anterior edge of the clypeus.

We report the presence of the red imported fire ant in New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. This species will undoubtedly further infest urban environments in the southwestern United States and finally invade southern California, where it will probably become a major pest.

Specimens were found infesting a home at Taylor Ranch, a west side suburb of Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the summer of 1994. They were apparently brought into the house in a large planter that re-

cently arrived from the Gulf Coast. We know of at least eight cases during 1994 and 1995 when trucks carrying cargo from the southeastern United States were inspected and stopped at the New Mexico/Arizona border. In six cases the trucks were taken to Albuquerque where they were fumigated. In the two other cases, the trucks were fumigated in Gallup, New Mexico. We know of no cases of trucks being stopped or fumigated during 1996. Discussions with pest control operators indicate that these eight cases are only a small fraction of the instances of fires ants found in commerce in New Mexico. This species was also collected at the ghost town of Steins, New Mexico (D. Richman, personal communication). Apparently a backhoe contaminated with soil was refused entry into Arizona and returned to the nearby off-ramp where the soil was removed. Steins is a very arid site, and it would no be expected that *S. invicta* could survive in such a site. The imported fire ant is also found in El Paso, Texas, the westernmost part of Texas. It occurs on the campus of the University of Texas where it nests at the bases of trees. It was also found near the Rio Grande River in El Paso in 1989 (R. Worthington, personal communication). It is not common in El Paso at the present time, but we expect it to become more common the this mesic, urban environment.

The red imported fire ant is not expected to become a major pest in New Mexico and western Texas, but these sites will undoubtedly serve as "stepping stones" for the invasion of the ant into California.

We thank three anonymous reviewers for helpful comments. Voucher specimens will be deposited in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution,

Washington, D.C., the collection of Texas A&M University, College Park, and in our Laboratory for Environmental Biology.

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BOOK REVIEW

Brethren of the Net: American Entomology, 1840-1880. By W. Conner Sorensen. The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, U.S.A. 1995. 357 pp., cloth. ISBN 0-8173-0755-9 \$59.95.

The idea of insect collectors during mid-Victorian America may not generate much initial enthusiasm for some readers. However, if one is interested in his or her entomological roots or the contributions of American entomology and entomologists to science, *Brethren of the Net* is an essential read. Sorensen's book provides a fascinating glimpse of the events and contributions that have shaped current scientific thinking and research not only in entomology but in other biological sciences as well. The book contains 12 chapters, two appendices, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, and includes several black and white plates and photographs.

The first chapter (*Entomology in the American Context*) highlights the period before the 1840's. Naturalists like Reaumur and Linnaeus were instrumental in establishing entomology as a special branch in natural history with its own nomenclature, literature, and community of experts. Linnaeus' approach to entomology provided a system of manageable terms for the discipline. While European entomologists flourished and occupied a niche in European zoological science, fewer resources were available for their American counterparts. By the turn of the 18th century, the situa-

tion had begun to change. This was due in part to the establishment of various institutions devoted to natural history in the Philadelphia, Boston-Cambridge, and to a lesser degree New York area. The careers of six Americans (John Abbot, Thaddeus William Harris, John Eatton LeConte, Frederick Valentine Melsheimer, John F. Melsheimer, William D. Peck, and Thomas Say) who figured prominently before the generation of 1840 are emphasized. These early workers were among the first Americans to specialize to a similar degree as the European entomologists. American entomologists were no longer content simply to collect specimens for the Europeans. American entomologists were coming in closer contact with one another but they lacked established institutions for practicing scientific entomology.

Chapter Two concentrates on the first American entomological society devoted to the study of insects—The Entomological Society of Pennsylvania. Here the emphasis is on the members that formed the nucleus of the group. Though there were no formal requirements for membership to the organization, the society was somewhat exclusive. The society's correspondence with other individuals with an interest in entomology was very significant. It served as a vital transition institution that bridged a time between a few isolated investigators and the time of specialists associated with large scientific institutions. Members of The Entomological Society of Pennsylvania